

nothing. So \$1 trillion is a staggering figure until it is put into context.

He says it will impact a sixth of the economy. He is right.

He says it will impact every American. He is right about that. It is the biggest challenge we have faced. It is one that is going to be tough, politically difficult, but we have to do it. As the President said, if it were easy, some other President would have done it a long time ago, but we have to do it now.

I believe most people understand that the bottom line here is that failing to do this—do nothing, as some on the other side of the aisle would suggest—isn't going to solve this problem, it is going to make it much worse. It is going to reach a point where we are going to face even grimmer choices in the future. The American people will stand up and work together on a bipartisan basis for something that is truly good for the common good. There will be dissenters. There are people standing outside now with signs against the public option. That is part of the American way. But the fact is, if we do nothing, this situation will get dramatically worse.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BEGICH). The Senator from Ohio.

MR. BROWN. Mr. President, I appreciate the words of Senator DURBIN, especially his story about Sandy Hill from Illinois and what he said about her situation.

I come to the floor often to share letters I have received from people all over my State who oftentimes were very happy with their health insurance and then found out their health insurance, once they got sick, wasn't so good. Let me share a couple of these letters, and then I have some other comments I wish to make.

Susan from Stark County, in the Canton area, writes:

The cost of having health insurance is coming to a point where I may have to drop it because of the cost. I have three years until I can qualify for Medicare, but in that, how high will my premiums increase? Right now my insurance costs almost \$500 a month and as of this November will increase another \$60 a month. The insurance companies dictate to the doctors what they can charge and to the patients how long hospital stays can be. This is not fair to those of us who have to try to pay our own way.

That is exactly what we are addressing in this bill. Many people have insurance. Many people are generally satisfied with their insurance, but they are seeing several things happen: The costs continue to go up; small businesses continue to be more burdened with the expense of covering their employees; and in too many cases, people who had decent insurance get denied care, perhaps because of a cap or a lifetime cap where they get very sick, they take biologic drugs, they go to the hospital for a long hospital stay, and all of a sudden they have busted their cap. In other words, the fine print in their insurance policy says: We are

not covering you after we spend X number of dollars. They have lost their insurance, and bankruptcy is too often around the corner.

Jeanne from Dayton writes:

Last November I was laid off from my job and lost my benefits at the same time. My husband has health insurance through his employer, but he might lose his job soon. We're both in our mid 50s and have more than 10 years to go before we can get on Medicare. We've been frugal all our lives. We've got enough money in savings to pay off our mortgage, if necessary. We could even live on the pensions we've accumulated starting today if we had to. But that's assuming we have no health problems in the next 10 years. Please don't let greed take away what we have worked so hard for.

The assistant majority leader, Senator DURBIN, just spoke about insurance subsidies and how this legislation is going to be good for insurance companies. It is going to get a good bit of money to the insurance industry so they can cover people and bring their rates down. That is why the public option Senator DURBIN spoke about is so important.

The public option will make sure the insurance companies play by the rules. We are going to have insurance reform in this bill. We are going to outlaw pre-existing conditions, the game of community rating. We are going to outlaw those insurance companies putting a cap on costs for any individual patient, either an annual cap or a lifetime cap. We are going to outlaw discrimination based on geography or gender or disability or age in this legislation. We are going to enforce these rules because we have all seen the insurance companies game the system even when the rules were thought to be strong and tight and ironclad. We know the insurance companies will still try to game the system. That is why the public option is so important.

The public option is an option. You can choose CIGNA or Aetna; you can choose, in my State, Medical Mutual, a not-for-profit headquartered in Cleveland; or you can choose the public option. The public option will make sure CIGNA and Aetna and those other for-profit insurance companies play by the rules. That is why it is so important.

Randolph is from Summit County. He says:

I have operated a small business in Ohio for 25 years. We have provided all of our employees health insurance from day one. It does hurt, it's the only area we can count on going up every single year—and not three or five percent, but double digit increases nearly every year for the past 27 years. These increases stop us from what we could do: Add more employees. This country needs health insurance reform now.

Randolph is exactly right. Almost every small businessperson I know wants to cover his or her employees. Those small businesses are getting so oppressed by these health insurance costs that it stops—in many cases, it means they have had to scale back the benefits they provide their employees, force their employees to pick up more of the cost. It also means, as Randolph

points out, he would like to hire more people, grow his business more, expand, but he can't do it because of health care costs. That is why this legislation is so important.

The public option is important to keep the insurance companies honest. The assistance we are going to provide for small businesses with tax credits will allow them to pool their resources, with the opportunity, if they choose, to go into the public option. All of that will help those smaller employers in Mansfield and Gallipolis, in Fremont and all over my State, will help those small employers, those small businesses prosper, be able to provide insurance for their employees, and allow them to grow and do what they want to do as businesspeople.

PEDIATRIC CANCER RESEARCH

MR. BROWN. On August 6, Alexa Brown, an 11-year-old from Clyde, OH, died of brain cancer. Alexa was an active, happy, and beautiful little girl. Her courage in the face of such tragic circumstances was inspiring.

Unfortunately, Alexa's battle with cancer is not an isolated case. Cancer is the No. 1 cause of nonaccidental death in children. It is responsible for more deaths from ages 1 to 19 than asthma and cystic fibrosis and AIDS combined.

In northwest Ohio and the area around Clyde, 19 other children have been diagnosed with a form of invasive cancer in the last decade. Public health officials are trying to get to the bottom of the environmental origins of this cancer cluster, as it is called, but in too many cases we simply don't know enough about the disease to reach any definitive conclusions.

It is this lack of knowledge and it is heartbreaking stories such as that of Alexa Brown that persuaded us in Congress to unanimously pass the Caroline Price Walker Conquer Childhood Cancer Act last year. That bill, named after former Ohio Representative Deborah Pryce's 9-year-old daughter who died of cancer, established a national patient registry for pediatric cancer patients at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as authorized additional funding for pediatric cancer research at the National Institutes of Health. After passing that bill, it may have been tempting to just claim victory, but today, 14 months later, there is still much to be done to fully realize the goals of that legislation.

The Senate version of the Labor, Health and Human Services appropriations bill does not yet include the direct funding authorized by the Caroline Pryce Walker Conquer Childhood Cancer Act. The House bill does. That is why today, on the last day of Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, Senator VOINOVICH and I sent a letter to appropriators urging that the final Labor-HHS package include \$10 million specifically—specifically—for pediatric cancer research.

Currently, the National Cancer Institute spends less than 4 percent of its budget on pediatric cancer. An extra \$10 million would boost that percentage and help our effort to get to the bottom of this deadly problem. It would give hope to those in Clyde, OH, and northwest Ohio and across my State and across this great country who have seen cancer's destruction firsthand.

I had a chance to meet with Alexa's family just a few days after their daughter passed away. You can imagine, it was a very emotional time for them and for their neighbors and for their friends at church and for their friends throughout Clyde and that part of the State. But even in their state of mourning, Alexa's mom and dad stressed the importance of making sure other families don't have to go through the same thing. I think our colleagues couldn't agree more.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2918, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Conference report to accompany H.R. 2918, making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes, having met, have agreed that the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate and agree to the same with an amendment, and the Senate agree to the same. Signed by all the conferees on the part of both Houses.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of the conference report.

(The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of Thursday, September 24, 2009.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska is recognized.

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that upon disposition of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2918, the Senate then proceed to the consideration of H. Con. Res. 191, a correcting resolution; that the concurrent resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, I rise today to present the conference report on H.R. 2918, the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act of 2010.

I will start by thanking the ranking member of the subcommittee, Senator MURKOWSKI, for her help throughout the process of completing the bill. We worked very well together, and the result is a true bipartisan product.

I also thank Chairman INOUE and Vice-Chairman COCHRAN for their support and direction this year as well.

At the request of the full committee, a clean, 1-month continuing resolution has been attached to this conference report.

I believe the bill we have before us today is a good one. This bill will allow the legislative branch to continue to operate and move forward during the next year.

When Senator MURKOWSKI and I began our hearings this year, we both agreed we should lead by example in the legislative branch—being good stewards of the taxpayers' dollars. Fiscal year 2010 would be a year of "must haves" versus a year of "nice to haves." With one notable, important, and understandable exception, I think we have been successful.

The final conference report contains \$50 million for the renovation of the Cannon House Office Building. The conferees included this funding at the request of the House. As a matter of comity, the House and Senate defer to the other body on funding decisions related to their side of the Chamber. The \$50 million for the Cannon Building Historical Fund accounts for most of the new overall spending above the cost-of-living increases in our bill.

The conference report before us today totals \$4.65 billion, which is \$156 million, or 3.5 percent, over fiscal year 2009, \$386 million below the budget request.

The bill provides \$926 million for the operations of the Senate, which is \$31 million, or 3.4 percent, above fiscal year 2009, and \$83 million below the request. I am happy to say we were able to reduce the Senate funding by \$8 million from the Senate-passed bill. In addition, \$1.37 billion is included for the operations of the House in fiscal year 2010.

The bill also provides \$328 million for the Capitol Police, which is \$22 million, or 7 percent, above fiscal year 2009. This amount fully funds the current onboard strength of 1,799 officers and provides for an additional five civilian employees to assist with the implementation of the radio project. Congress made the decision earlier this year to move forward with this long-overdue project. So now it is critical that the Capitol Police has the personnel it needs to bring this project in successfully—on time and on budget. No excuses.

The Library of Congress is funded at \$643 million, an increase of \$36 million, or 6 percent, above current year, including full funding requested for the Library's information technology upgrades, which is a top priority of Dr. Billington.

The conference agreement includes \$602 million for the Architect of the

Capitol. Setting aside the \$50 million for the renovation of the Cannon House Building, this mark represents a \$22 million, or 4 percent, overall increase for the Architect of the Capitol. The bill includes a very good balance of energy reduction, deferred facilities maintenance, and code compliance projects within the funding provided.

The Government Accountability Office is funded at \$557 million, an increase of \$26 million, or 5 percent, above fiscal year 2009. This funding supports additional staff to assist GAO in carrying out its vital role in the oversight of the Federal Government.

The Government Printing Office is funded at \$147 million, an increase of \$7 million, or 5 percent, above current year. This increase provides funding for several of GPO's high-priority information technology projects and much needed repairs to the elevator system of the GPO building.

The conferees included \$45 million for the Congressional Budget Office, which is an increase of \$1 million above fiscal year 2009. This will provide CBO with the support it needs to fulfill its mission serving Congress.

The Office of Compliance is funded at \$4.4 million, which is \$305,000, or 7 percent, over current year.

Finally, the conference report includes \$12 million for the Open World Leadership Fund. This represents a decrease of \$2 million below current year and \$2.5 million below the Senate-passed fiscal year 2010 level.

Mr. President, in closing, I thank the staff members who have assisted us throughout this process. First, from Senator MURKOWSKI's staff, I thank Carrie Apostolou and Sarah Wilson for their hard work on this bill. From my staff, I thank Nancy Olkewicz, Kate Howard, and Teri Curtin for their assistance in producing this important legislation.

With that, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator in Hawaii is recognized.

Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, I rise to support the Legislative Branch conference report, which includes a continuing resolution allowing the government to maintain normal operations until October 31, 2009.

I thank Chairman NELSON and Ranking Member MURKOWSKI for their hard work on this bill. I believe the final product before us is fiscally responsible legislation that meets the essential needs of both the House and Senate. I applaud their efforts to urge its adoption by the Senate.

With regard to the continuing resolution, I note that today is September 30, the last day of the fiscal year. With our men and women in uniform fighting on two fronts, and with our economy at a critical stage in its recovery from the worst recession we have faced in several generations, it is inconceivable that we would allow for any disruption of the essential services provided by the Federal Government. We simply